

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 EB-08 COME-00 TRSE-00 OES-07 DLOS-09

INT-05 /100 W

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R 061300Z JAN 78

FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6385

INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

DIA WASHDC

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 0235

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: UR, CH, JA

SUBJECT: SOVIET-JAPANESE RELATIONS: SONODA VISIT TO MOSCOW

SUMMARY: JAPANESE-SOVIET PEACE TREATY, TERRITORIAL PROBLEMS, FISHING AND ECONOMIC TOPICS WILL BE DISCUSSED DURING THE JAN 9-11 SONODA-GROMYKO TALKS IN MOSCOW. WE ANTICIPATE NO SOVIET "GIVE" ON THE NORTHERN TERRITORIES ISSUE AND LITTLE POSSIBILITY THAT THE VISIT WILL SIGNIFICANTLY IMPROVE THE "COOL" STATE OF SOVIET-JAPANESE RELATIONS. END SUMMARY.

1. OUR SOVIET CONTACTS ARE NOT PREDICTING ANY "BREAK-CONFIDENTIAL

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THROUGHS" IN JAPANESE-SOVIET RELATIONS DURING FOREIGN MINISTER SONODA'S JAN 8-11 VISIT TO MOSCOW. THE AGENDA FOR THE TALKS WILL COVER DISCUSSIONS ON A SOVIET-JAPANESE PEACE TREATY AND OTHER BILATERAL, AS WELL AS MULTILATERAL, ISSUES. SOVIET JAPAN SPECIALIST AND CHIEF, USA INSTITUTE, ASIA SECTION, V. LUKIN (PROTECT), COMMENTED JAN 4 THAT THERE IS "NO ROOM" FOR

PROGRESS ON SOLVING THE TERRITORIAL PROBLEM THAT IS BLOCKING PROGRESS ON THE PEACE TREATY. HE SAID THAT THE SOVIET UNION, ALONG WITH MANY OTHER COUNTRIES, HAS FORMALLY RECOGNIZED EUROPEAN BOUNDARIES. IT CANNOT NO "DE-RECOGNIZE" ITS ASIAN BOUNDARIES. THIS APPLIES TO JAPANESE TERRITORIAL CLAIMS WHICH HE DOWNPLAYED AS MERELY "SYMBOLIC".

2. LUKIN ALSO HELD THAT THE RECENT ACTIVATION IN TOKYO OF THE SINO-JAPANESE PEACE AND FRIENDSHIP TREATY (PFT) ISSUE AMOUNTS TO "BLACKMAIL" (SHANTAZH) AGAINST THE SOVIET UNION, AND WILL NOT SUCCEED IN ELICITING CONCESSIONS FROM MOSCOW. LUKIN OBSERVED THAT THE JAPANESE HAVE IMPORTANT AND GROWING ECONOMIC TIES WITH THE SOVIET UNION, E.G., JAPANESE FISHERMEN FISH IN SOVIET WATERS. THESE FACTORS ARGUE AGAINST JAPAN SIGNING THE PFT. IN ADDITION, HE CLAIMED, JAPAN IS A LARGE POWER IN ITS OWN RIGHT AND THEREFORE WILL NOT ALLOW ITSELF TO BE DRAGGED INTO THE CHINESE "ORBIT". ON SOVIET-JAPANESE RELATIONS, HE COMMENTED THAT SOVIET POLICY SHOULD BE GEARED TOWARDS DEEPENING ECONOMIC TIES WITH JAPAN. JAPAN NEEDS SOVIET RESOURCES. OVER THE LONG RUN, HE PREDICTED, INCREASED ECONOMIC COOPERATION WILL MOVE THE POLITICAL DIFFERENCES INTO THE BACKGROUND.
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3. JAPANESE EMBOFF HERE ALSO SAW NO PROSPECTS FOR SOVIET "GIVE" ON THE NORTHERN TERRITORIES ISSUE. HE SAID SONODA WOULD NEVERTHELESS CONCENTRATE ON THIS TOPIC DURING THE TALKS. THE JAPANESE WILL ATTEMPT TO PIN THE SOVIETS DOWN ON AN EARLY RESUMPTION OF NEGOTIATIONS ON THE LONG-TERM FISHING AGREEMENT DUE TO EXPIRE IN APRIL. THE PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH A MINISTERIAL LEVEL COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC COOPERATION WILL ALSO BE DISCUSSED. SOURCE SAID THAT THE TERRITORIAL PROBLEM WAS PARTLY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE "GO SLOW" ATTITUDE OF JAPANESE BUSINESSMEN TOWARDS SIBERIA JOINT PROJECTS IN RECENT YEARS. A SOLUTION WOULD SUBSTANTIALLY IMPROVE THE CLIMATE OF SOVIET-JAPANESE RELATIONS AND RESULT IN ACCELERATED JAPANESE INVESTMENT. HE ACKNOWLEDGED, HOWEVER, THAT GIVEN JAPAN'S NEED FOR ECONOMIC RESOURCES, A FUTURE UPSWING IN JAPANESE INVESTMENT IN SIBERIA IS ALMOST INEVITABLE, WHETHER OR NOT THE TREATY IS SIGNED.

4. COMMENT: THE JAPANESE APPEAR TO HAVE LITTLE

LEVERAGE THAT THEY CAN BRING TO BEAR ON MOSCOW DURING THE TALKS WITH RESPECT TO THE JAPANESE CLAIMS TO THE NORTHERN TERRITORIES. THE SOVIETS WILL USE THE UPCOMING MEETING OF FOREIGN MINISTERS TO ENCOURAGE MORE JAPANESE INVESTMENT IN SIBERIA. THEY WILL ALSO CRITICIZE, SCOLD OR CAJOLE THE JAPANESE ON THE PFT AND (IF RECENT JAPANESE-SOVIET PRESS FULMINATIONS ARE AN INDICATOR) JAPANESE GOVERNMENT PROPOSALS TO THE DIET TO INCREASE DEFENSE SPENDING. IN SUM, APART FROM THE ECONOMIC AREA, SOVIET-JAPANESE RELATIONS STILL LACK "COMMON GROUND". THERE APPEARS TO BE LITTLE POSSIBILITY THAT FOREIGN MINISTER SONODA'S VISIT TO MOSCOW WILL SIGNIFICANTLY IMPROVE ON THE CURRENT "COOL" STATE OF
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SOVIET-JAPANESE RELATIONS.
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